



Frequently Asked Questions

- How Am I Selected for Jury Service?
- What Types of Cases Will Jurors Serve?
- Who Is Considered “Qualified” for Jury Service?
- What Happens if I Fail to Report for Jury Service?
- How Long Is My Term of Service?
- What Is the Difference Between the U.S. District Court and DC Superior Court?
- What If I Receive a Jury Summons for DC Superior Court?
- Can I Be Deferred or Excused from Jury Service?
- What Should I Do If I Receive a Summons for a Relative Who Is Physically or Mentally Handicapped?
- Will I Be Compensated for Jury Duty?
- Will I Have to Pay Taxes on Jury Duty Fees?
- What About My Employer?
- How Do I Find Out the Dates and Times for Reporting to Jury Duty?
- Where Do I Report?
- What Are the Procedures for Inclement Weather?
- What Should I Bring with Me when I Report for Jury Duty?
- What Can I Bring?
- Are There Restrictions Regarding What Can Be Brought into the Courthouse?
- Is There a Dress Code?
- Is Smoking Allowed in the Federal Building?
- Does the Court Provide Lunch?
- What Should I Do in Case of an Emergency?

Jury Frequently Asked Questions

How Am I Selected for Jury Duty?

Your name was randomly selected by a computer system that draws juror names from source lists provided by several D.C. government agencies: Board of Elections, Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Tax and Revenue, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The Court then mails you a juror summons and questionnaire form to be completed and returned.

What Types of Cases Will Jurors Serve?

Within the Federal Court, both civil and criminal cases are tried. Some examples of civil cases include contract disputes, civil rights, motor vehicle accidents, freedom of information, and employment disputes. Criminal cases involve a party (or parties) who have been accused of violating a federal law and who have been indicted by the grand jury. Due to the location of this district court in Washington, D.C., many of the cases tried here are of national interest to the American people.

Who Is Considered “Qualified” for Jury Service?

A person must be a citizen of the United States who resides in the District of Columbia and is at least 18 years of age. The citizen must be able to read, write, speak, and understand the English language.

People who have pending felony criminal charges punishable by more than one year in prison, have been convicted of a felony without having their civil rights restored, or have a permanent physical or mental disability that would prevent jury service may not serve as a juror. Individuals exempt from service are full-time military, police, firefighters, and elected public officials.

What Happens if I Fail to Report for Jury Service?

If you are unable to report for jury service or require an excuse for undue hardship, you must submit an excuse in writing on the back of the questionnaire. If you are not excused and fail to report for jury service, the Court may issue an order to the United States Marshal Service to have you brought before a judge for a show cause hearing. Any person who fails to show good cause for noncompliance with a summons may be fined and/or imprisoned, or both.

How Long Is My Term of Service?

The U.S. District Court has two types of juries: petit jury and grand jury. The summons that you receive from the Court will identify either petit juror or grand juror. Petit jurors are on call for 2 weeks. The average petit juror serves approximately 3 to 6 days during that 2-week term. The time of service for a grand jury is 18 months. The grand juror actually serves approximately 8 days a month.

What Is the Difference Between the U.S. District Court and D.C. Superior Court?

The U.S. District Court is a Federal Court that has jurisdiction over cases arising under Federal law or when the U.S. Government is a party. The D.C. Superior Court is the court of local jurisdiction.

What If I Receive a Jury Summons for D.C. Superior Court?

If you receive a summons for the U.S. District Court and D.C. Superior Court for the same day, you must report to the U.S. District Court for jury duty. However, you must request a postponement from the D.C. Superior Court Jury Office. Please be aware that service in D.C. Superior Court does not excuse you from serving in the U.S. District Court. However, once you serve in the U.S. District Court, you are excused from serving in this Court for a period of two years.

Can I Be Deferred or Excused from Jury Service?

After you have completed the questionnaire, you may request to be deferred or excused in the remark's section on the back of the form or you may submit a letter. The Jury Office processes requests to be excused or deferred. Citizens who have requested a deferral or excuse may begin calling the automated telephone system 10 days ahead of the actual reporting date on the summons to determine the status of the request. The number for the automated telephone system is (202) 354-3518. Using your telephone touch-tone keypad, type in the 9-digit number located on your summons to verify if your request has been granted.

What Should I Do if I Receive a Summons for a Deceased Resident?

Write "deceased" on the form and indicate your relationship to the deceased, sign the form, and mail it back to the Court.

What Should I Do if I Receive a Summons for a Relative Who Is Physically or Mentally Handicapped?

Fill out the form for the relative and sign the individual's name in the appropriate location and then sign your name below. In the remark's section, write an explanation why it was necessary for you to complete the form for that relative.

Will I Be Compensated for Jury Duty?

Non-government employees are paid \$40.00 per day of service. Jurors who are employed by the Federal or District of Columbia Government will continue to receive their regular paychecks. All jurors will receive a transportation allowance of \$4.00 per day.

Will I Have to Pay Taxes on Jury Duty Fees?

Any income over \$600 received for jury attendance must be reported as income for tax purposes. The Court will issue you an IRS Form 1099. However, you do not need to report the travel allowance as income.

What About My Employer?

Employers are not allowed to discharge, threaten to discharge, or intimidate or coerce any permanent employee for attending jury duty. Employers may not request jurors to be excused. Upon request, the Jury Office will provide an attendance letter, or the employee can show his/her jury summons.

How Do I Find Out the Dates and Times for Reporting to Jury Duty?

After submitting your questionnaire, you are required to call the automated phone system after 5:00 p.m. on the evening before your first reporting date. The automated phone system will ask you to punch in the nine-digit number located above your name and address on the summons. If you do not have a touch-tone telephone, please call the Jury Office at (202) 354-3090 for instructions at 8:00 a.m. on the next business day. If you are required to report, the automated telephone will announce your reporting time. If you are not required to report for the next day, the recording will instruct you to call again at a specified time.

Where Do I Report?

The Jury Office is located on the fourth floor in Room 4214.

What Are the Procedures for Inclement Weather?

In the event of inclement weather, jurors may call (202) 354-3000 (main number to the courthouse) to receive information about whether the Court will be open or closed. The automated jury phone line (202-354-3318) will also provide a recorded message in the event of Court closure. Jurors may also tune into WJLA-TV (Channel 7) and WTOP and WMAL radio stations regarding the Court's status. Unless the news specifically states "the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia is closed," the Court is open.

What Should I Bring with Me When I Report for Jury Duty?

Please bring your jury summons with you when you report to the Jury Office, and a photo ID to enter the building.

What Can I Bring?

You may bring your lunch, books, magazines, study materials, and laptop computers. Laptop computers, cell phones, and beepers are permitted in the building. However, Court Security Officers will screen such equipment through the magnetometer prior to entering the building. All electronic equipment must be turned off in the courtrooms.

Are There Restrictions Regarding What May Be Brought into the Courthouse?

The Courthouse has restrictions on the types of items that are allowed to be brought into the building. Items such as pocketknives, pepper spray, etc. will be confiscated and returned when you leave for the day.

Is There a Dress Code?

Jurors are expected to dress in a manner that is respectful to the formality of the court proceedings. Denim jeans, shorts, tee shirts, athletic wear, and hats are not appropriate. Since the courtrooms can be cool, you may want to bring a sweater or light jacket.

Is Smoking Allowed in the Federal Building?

The E. Barrett Prettyman Courthouse is a non-smoking building. You may step outside during breaks to smoke.

Does the Court Provide Lunch?

The Court provides lunch only during jury deliberations. Otherwise, you should bring your lunch with you or buy your lunch in the cafeteria on the basement level. The Jury Lounge has a microwave and refrigerator available for jurors to use.

What Should I Do in Case of a Family Emergency?

If you cannot report for jury duty due to a family emergency or your family needs to reach you due to an emergency, please call the Jury Office at (202) 354-3090.